a safety lock including a slidable block that slides substantially lengthwise relative to the handle and is adapted to obstruct the movement of the distal end of the blade when the blade is in the closed position.

REMARKS

In the Office action mailed July 29, 2002, claims 1-5, 8, 9 and 13-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C § 102(b) and claims 3, 6, 7 and 10-12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

In response, applicant has rewritten claims 3 and 6 in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims and are thus in allowable form. Claims 4 and 8 have been amended to depend from such independent claims. Claims 5 and 7 are unamended as they currently depend from the amended claims. Therefore, claims 4-8 depend from an allowable claim and should be allowable based at least upon the reason of depending from an allowable base claim.

Applicant also has rewritten claims 10-12 in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, claims 10-12 should be allowable. Applicant has further amended claims 9, 19 and 20 as discussed below. Claims 1, 2 and 13-18 have been cancelled without prejudice. Applicant's cancellation of claims 1, 2 and 13-18 and amendment of claims 4, 8, 9, 19 and 20 render many of the prior art rejections moot. Applicant also has added new claim 21.

Original claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of Maxey et al. Applicant respectfully disagrees that Maxey et al. illustrates or discloses a safety lock as

recited in claim 9. The assist mechanism disclosed in Maxey et al. enables a user to easily open the knife with one hand. It does not operate to lock the blade in a closed position. Nevertheless, in the interest of furthering the prosecution of the application, applicant has amended claim 9 to recite a "user-manipulable" safety lock. Support for the amendment is found in the specification, which describes that safety lock 22 is movable and positionable in an unlocked or inoperable position and a locked or operable position (*see* pg. 6, paragraph 0020). Maxey does not disclose any such user-manipulable safety lock. Thus, in view of the amendment to claim 9, applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claims 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of Roberson. Roberson illustrates a knife with an interchangeable, pivotable double-ended blade where each end of the blade includes a hole into which a locking pin may be inserted to secure the blade in a desired position. Roberson does not disclose a "channel" as described in applicant's specification (*see* pg. 5, paragraph 0018). Nonetheless, claims 19 and 20 have been amended to clarify that the block of the safety lock "slides along a slotted hole to move between an operable position and an inoperable position." Such a slotted hole is not disclosed in Roberson.

As required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.121, applicant has provided a separate marked-up version of the amended specification and claims.

The above amendments and remarks are believed to address fully the Examiner's rejections, and place the application in condition for allowance. A prompt indication of the

same respectfully is requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned if any issues remain that may be resolved by a telephonic interview.

CERTIFICATE OF MAIL
Date of Deposit – October 29, 2002

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service under 37 C.F.R. 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on October 29, 2002.

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1, 2 and 13-18 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 3-4, 6, 8-12, 19 and 20 as follows:

3. (Amended) A folding knife comprising:

a blade including a distal end and a tang;

a handle configured to include a hollow region for receiving the blade, said blade being pivotally coupled to the handle via a pin to position the knife between an open position and a closed position; and

a lock mounted to the handle, wherein said lock is configured to slide in [The knife of claim 2, wherein said channel is] a slotted hole in the handle to transition between an operable position and an inoperable position, where in the operable position said lock is configured to obstruct a path of the distal end of the blade to prevent the knife from being placed in the open position.

4. (Amended) The knife of claim [2] 3, wherein said lock is configured to use friction to maintain a position in the channel.

6. (Amended) A folding knife comprising:

a blade including a distal end and a tang;

a handle configured to include a hollow region for receiving the blade, said blade being pivotally coupled to the handle via a pin to position the knife between an open position and a closed position;

a lock mounted to the handle, said lock configured to obstruct a path of the distal end of the blade to prevent the knife from being placed in the open position; and

[The knife of claim 1, the knife further comprising] a bias element configured to assist a user in opening the knife.

8. (Amended) The knife of claim [1] 3, wherein the tang is configured to protrude from the handle when the knife is in the closed position.

9. (Amended) A folding knife comprising:

a blade including a distal end and a tang;

a handle including a hollow region configured to receive the blade, said blade being pivotally coupled to the handle via a pin;

a bias element housed in the handle and configured to assist the blade in extending from the hollow region of the handle; and

a user-manipulable safety lock configured to prevent the blade from moving out of the hollow region of the handle.

10. (Amended) A folding knife comprising:

a blade including a distal end and a tang;

a handle including a hollow region configured to receive the blade, said blade being pivotally coupled to the handle via a pin;

a bias element housed in the handle and configured to assist the blade in extending from the hollow region of the handle; and

a safety lock configured to prevent the blade from moving out of the hollow region of the handle [The knife of claim 9,] wherein the safety lock includes a block that limits the movement of the distal end of the blade.

11. (Amended) A folding knife comprising:

a blade including a distal end and a tang;

a handle including a hollow region configured to receive the blade, said blade being pivotally coupled to the handle via a pin;

a bias element housed in the handle and configured to assist the blade in extending from the hollow region of the handle; and

a safety lock configured to prevent the blade from moving out of the hollow region of the handle [The knife of claim 9,] wherein the safety lock is configured to slide in a channel in the handle.

12. (Amended) A folding knife comprising:

a blade including a distal end and a tang;

a handle including a hollow region configured to receive the blade, said blade being pivotally coupled to the handle via a pin;

a bias element housed in the handle and configured to assist the blade in extending from the hollow region of the handle; and

a safety lock configured to prevent the blade from moving out of the hollow region of the handle [The knife of claim 9,] wherein the safety lock is configured to slide to a position that allows the blade to move out of the hollow region of the handle.

19. (Amended) A safety lock for locking a blade of a folding knife in a folded position, comprising a block configured to contact the distal end of the blade to prevent the blade from moving out of the folded position [The safety lock of claim 16,] wherein the block slides along a [channel] slotted hole to move between an operable position and an inoperable position.

20. (Amended) The safety lock of claim 19, wherein the block uses friction to maintain a position in the [channel] slotted hole.

21. (New) A folding knife comprising:

a blade including a distal end and a tang;

a handle including a hollow region configured to receive the blade, the blade being pivotally coupled to the handle and moveable between an open position and a closed position; and

a safety lock including a slidable block that slides substantially lengthwise relative to the handle and is adapted to obstruct the movement of the distal end of the blade when the blade is in the closed position.